# RESTORATION REVIEW

## THE ELIJAH BLUES

When Elijah said, "I alone am left," God replied: "I have for myself seven thousand men." This encouraged Paul to conclude: "So too at the present time there is a remnant, chosen by grace." Let us who are engaged in preserving "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" also believe that there are many concerned ones who are longing for greater expressions of freedom. They only await courageous leadership.

The words of Edmund Burke must burn within us: "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

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## IN RESPONSE TO AN EDITORIAL IN "FIRM FOUNDATION"

In the October 26 issue of *Firm Foundation,* brother Reuel Lemmons wrote somewhat about an editorial in this journal, as well as some things said by brother Carl Ketcherside. We shall quote only that part of the editorial that is directed to us, with a view of making some statements that may prove helpful. The editorial was entitled "The Further they Go, the Worse they Get."

> When brethren go off on a tangent, the further they go the greater distance from the truth. It is noticeable that it is extremely difficult for one who has embraced liberalism even to a small degree to ever pull back from it. He goes further and further into it until he is finally lost completely. The gravitational pull of truth seems to be less and less the further they get from it.
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> This is graphically demonstrated by Leroy Garrett in the September issue of *Restoration Review,* and by Carl Ketcherside in his October issue of *Mission Messenger.* We do not propose to review either's position in this brief notice, but simply call attention to what the liberal attitudes of these men have ripened into.
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> Garrett says: "When a man proclaims victory over sin through the risen Christ he is a gospel preacher. Men like Dr. Criswell, Bishop Martin, and Billy Graham proclaim the glad tidings of heaven. They may err in their instructions as to how men are to respond to the gospel, just as we all err in many things, but they are as much preachers of the gospel as any of the rest of us . . . It was in proclaiming the facts of heaven that made Paul a gospel preacher. The same proclamation today makes the one who proclaims it a gospel preacher, be he a Methodist bishop, a Baptist evangelist, or a Church of Christ minister from Abilene."
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> We deny that the men mentioned above preach the gospel. The gospel is more than "acts to be believed." There is a "plan" involved in preaching the gospel as well as a "man". No man preaches the gospel who does not tell men correctly how to become saved. Telling them that is a part of preaching the gospel. This was the fallacy of Brother Moser's teaching many years ago. And this same fallacy permeates some of our "brotherhood Bible school literature" today as well as some preaching. One preaches only a part of the gospel who preaches only its facts. The gospel has facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, and promises to be enjoyed. It

> takes them all to preach the gospel. If the men mentioned above preach the gospel, then the preaching of these men makes Christians since the gospel is the power of God unto salvation.

We understand from several sources, one being his own editorials, that brother Lemmons is deeply concerned over the tendency toward "liberal" thinking on the part of Church of Christ youth. The attitude shown by the editor in the above article may be one important reason why our young people are in rebellion to orthodoxy. Our brother editor seems to be incapable of entertaining the notion that he himself might possibly be wrong. He has a way of equating "the truth" with what he and the *Firm Foundation* have always stood for. He does not merely call certain ideas of a Ketcherside or a Garrett into question; they are *ex cathedra* disposed of because of their "great distance from the truth." Brother Lemmons himself, along with all Church of Christ orthodoxy, stand at the very center of "the gravitational pull of truth."

While he includes others within Church of Christ circles, besides Ketcherside and Garrett, that are in this tangential orbit, he is nonetheless sure of his own position. Brother Moser of yesteryear and some preachers of today, along with writers of Bible school literature — and he could have added, of course, many youth in the universities — are afflicted with the same fallacy. We could easily add the consensus of the entire world of Biblical scholarship as to what constitutes the gospel, if brother Lemmons would like. But all this apparently means nothing to the editor. He knows what the truth is, and he knows we are off on a tangent. And the further we go the worse we get. I shudder to see my brother use the term "the truth" so patronizingly. Pontius Pilate asked the wrong man the question, "What is truth?"

The most important feature of the editorial, however, is that it points up the fact that *the nature of the gospel is* the crucial issue in our efforts to restore unity in our divided ranks. It may alarm us for someone to suggest that all these years we have not known the meaning of *the gospel*, and yet I am convinced that it is here that the battle is joined.

Brother Lemmons' view of the gospel involves more than is suggested by this one editorial. Even if Billy Graham *did* make clear the terms of pardon as stated in Acts 2:38, he still would not be "a gospel preacher" if he remained within the framework of the Baptist Church. To brother Lemmons *the gospel* includes the whole of the New Testament scriptures, and no man is a minister of that gospel unless he teaches the entire revelation. He would admit, I suppose, that Dr. Criswell preaches *part* of the gospel when he proclaims the risen Christ as Lord, but in neglecting another *part*, the terms of pardon, he does not really preach the gospel. But it does not end there, according to Church of Christ orthodoxy, for even if he does carefully spell out the formula of "believe, repent, confess, and be baptized for the remission of sins," he still preaches only *part* of the gospel. He still is not "a gospel preacher" unless he "preaches the truth" about the church, the Lord's supper, the name we are to wear, instrumental music, and all the rest.

Now we can better understand why we are so divided. When we differ on some doctrinal point, it is supposed that someone has distorted the gospel, and so we have to start another loyal church. Each faction supposes it is the only true church, for it is the only one "true to the gospel" in reference to music, missionary activity, Sunday School, support of institutions, or whatever the issue might be.

My position is that the gospel is the *glad tidings of Christ* — His death, burial and resurrection in our behalf — which is Paul's definition of the gospel in 1 Cor. 15:3-4. There are terms to the acceptance of the gospel, to be sure, and these are faith, repentance, and immersion, though these are not part of the proclamation itself. In other words, I believe Peter had already preached the gospel — *all* of the gospel — when in Acts 2 the crowd asked him what to do. He might not have even mentioned baptism had they not asked him, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" In Acts 13 Paul preaches the gospel without mentioning baptism, though he might have done so had he been asked what Peter was asked on Pentecost.

This makes baptism no less important. It only puts it in proper perspective. It is the same difference that there is in the good news that a rich man has died and left you his fortune, and the instructions you later receive as to what steps you must take to make the fortune legally yours. I stated clearly that I regret that Billy Graham does not instruct the people as to the terms of pardon, and in this he is wrong, but he is nevertheless a gospel preacher in that he proclaims the very propositions that the apostle Paul identifies as the gospel.

My position stresses the importance of seeing that it is *the gospel* that makes men brothers in Christ, which was accomplished long before we had the New Testament scriptures. It is "obeying the gospel" that unites us in Christ, but this must not be made to mean a correct understanding and practice of everything in the New Testament scriptures. We can all understand and obey the gospel, as all our various groups have, but we do and always have differed on many doctrinal teachings.

Unity is not, therefore, contingent on unanimity of interpretation of all the scriptures, but upon obedience to the gospel. We can, therefore, be different on these things that we are divided over, and still be one brotherhood, treat and accept each other as brothers. The only line of fellowship is the gospel itself, and that does not include the many doctrines that we seem unable to understand alike.

## COMMENT ON COMMENTS

It may prove helpful to "share the mail" with our readers by passing along a few comments from some of those who are kind enough to send us their reactions to our editorials. We offer a few comments of our own that might help to clear the air.

The greater part of your article on Alexander Campbell sounded like the Leroy Garrett I used to know, instead of the Garrett after whom I have read of late. Examples: " . . . Christian union can be realized when all sects return to that faith and practice which they all concede to be scriptural and apostolic." Again: "There is the infallibly safe way, Campbell believed, and this is the only way to unity."

You state that Campbell insisted upon "more than a correct order of faith and practice," which is to imply that he did insist upon a correct order of faith and practice. Human errors were his "obstacles to a restoration of the ancient order," and "the restoration of Primitive Christianity." Campbell had "both doctrinal and ethical *imperatives."* He refused to "compromise the seven unities mentioned by St. Paul."

Now unless the all-sufficiency of the Bible and the all-sufficiency of the church are "opinions" rather than facts, then we are not guilty of making our opinions tests of fellowship to the division of the church. Your premise is that every fact must be accepted; opinions must be privately held. You must reply, apparently, that some of the things held as "facts" by us are only opinions. If so, I think the sectarians will contest some "facts" (i. e. virgin birth, bodily resurrection, immersion), affirming that they are mere opinions of Leroy Garrett.

I have no difficulty acknowledging as Christians all who accept the gospel facts and obey Christ, though some by immorality and error make shipwreck of the faith.

Your article sounded more like the typical restoration appeal than some of the things you have been writing of late. Your general reasoning makes me wonder why you hold so tenaciously to baptism. It seems that sprinkling, in your system, would serve as well, if the person did what he then thought was right. —- Cecil Willis, Editor, *Truth Magazine,* Box 7245, Akron 6, Ohio

We appreciate these helpful remarks from a beloved brother and a fellow editor. You might wish to subscribe to his journal at $3.00 a year. In my opinion it is by far the best edited of the papers issued by the so-called "conservative" element among Churches of Christ.

We must distinguish between what is essential to fellowship among Christians and what is necessary for the restoration of primitive Christianity. Fellowship can be a reality even when men differ on what are facts and what are opinions. I can be in fellowship with a man even if he has not accepted all the facts of the Bible that I have. It may be that he doesn't *reject* any fact, for he may simply not yet understand, or he has not yet learned what I have learned. Or he may see as a mere opinion what I see as a fact. I do not argue, therefore, that "every fact must be accepted" in order to make fellowship possible. I would rather say every *gospel* fact must be believed and acted upon. Only those who believe and obey the gospel can be brothers.

There is, of course, much more involved in restoring certain doctrines and practices to the church. Virtually all the divisions among our churches today come within this area. My argument is that we can restore fellowship within our divided ranks on the basis that we are all in Christ together. We have all believed and obeyed the gospel of Christ, which is the only possible basis of unity. We can still differ in our interpretations as to what constitutes a restoration of primitive Christianity. And the dialogue for better understanding should continue while we enjoy the unity of the Spirit.

Yes, the "conservatives" are guilty of frustrating the fellowship of the saints in that they confuse what is necessary for unity with what is essential for restoration. Our "liberal" brethren who support the Herald of Truth organization may indeed be wrong, and we may insist that they obstruct efforts to restore primitive Christianity. But still they are our brethren, and unity must not be marred by disagreements in this area. The debate should, of course, go on, provided we can treat each other as brothers. Fellowship can be just as real even when we differ on institutionalism, and if we really love each other we will not allow such differences to separate us.

I can use my own convictions in regard to innovations as an example. I must insist, as I have for 15 years as an editor, that the professional minister, who displaces the function of the elders in the congregation, must go. He has no place in the restored church. I shall continue to work to that end. I am personally convinced that all who foster the minister system are impeding the restoration, however good their intentions may be. But this in no wise affects my relationship with all these brethren. They are just as much my brethren, and we are just as much within the fellowship of Christ as if we saw eye to eye on the pastor system.

As I understand it, you "conservative" brethren do not do it this way. You make fellowship contingent upon agreement on the "issues confronting the church." There will always be such issues, and always have been, and unity will never be possible if we must await unanimity on the issues. My avowal is that we can work toward a better understanding of the issues within the framework of unity. Unity first, then the dialogue; not the reverse of that.

This is the whole point in what Campbell was saying in the quotations you give. Yes, he insisted on certain doctrinal and ethical imperatives for the restoration of primitive Christianity. At the same time he accepted the Baptists and others as his brethren, for they had obeyed the same gospel that he had. All such were within the fellowship of the saints. But the task of restoring certain neglected features of primitive Christianity to the modern church was something else. This is what he was calling upon all Christians (including those in "the sects") to help him accomplish.

It is this important distinction, my dear brother Willis, that you fail to see. You and brother E. R. Harper are as much within the fellowship as you and brother Yater Tant. The gospel of Christ brings all three of you together as one. Things like sponsoring churches, instrumental music and premillennialism cannot mar "the unity of the Spirit" unless brethren do not love each other. You can and should continue to oppose what you believe to be an innovation, but you must not draw the line of fellowship on a brother because he differs with you.

## TEXAS

> Your paper deals almost entirely with denouncing the Church of Christ and building up all other denominations. One issue begins with a fine article on "Who is a real Christian?", but the rest of the entire publication points out the inadequacies of the Church of Christ. Another issue begins with a criticism of the Church of Christ term "Christian Education," while your next note builds up a picture of a good man of another denomination. After a good lesson on "the Pastor System," you again point out the faults of a Church of Christ associated college in Abilene. The next three articles in your paper show weaknesses of the Church of Christ . . . *Please expose false teaching from all sources!* -Tyler, Texas

While I am unaware of "building up all other denominations," I offer no apology for being a critic within the Church of Christ. The answer is simple: *I am trying to make conditions better among Churches of Christ.* If conditions are to improve, there must be considerable self-criticism; and our readers will notice that there are many beside myself, but all *within* the Church of Christ, that make their criticisms. They are all trying to help. If I thought they had an ax to grind, I would not publish their stuff. My writers are both young and old, and among the best educated and most promising men in the brotherhood. They write because they are concerned. They are dedicated men of prayer who are willing to suffer reprisals in order to cultivate a more spiritual brotherhood. And there are many other! who, while they do not write, are with us in spirit as we engage in self-criticism. After all, you must remember that I also am in the Church of Christ, and I have always been willing to take my share of the blame for conditions being what they are. We are in a venture of self-criticism. I, too, would take a dim view of an outsider taking us to task, for I would think he should be busy criticizing his own church. To the contrary, outsiders are usually impressed when people within a religious communion indulge in self-evaluation.

The request that I criticize others as well as the Church of Christ is as old as reformatory efforts themselves. The prophet Amos was told: "Get out of here, you prophet, you! Flee to the land of Judah and do your prophesying there!" It is like the little boy who gets a spanking, complaining that Mother does not spank his brother too. Never was there a reformer, whether a Martin Luther, a Martin Luther King, a John Knox, or an Alexander Campbell, who was not told what Amos was told: *go somewhere else!* I am planning to

stay, and I hope generations to come will be glad that a lot of us are staying, just as we are thankful that the reformers of yesteryear stayed.

> I received through the mail this month one of your publications, *Mission Messenger.* I do not appreciate such trash being sent me. Men like you and Leroy Garrett are a disgrace to our Lord, but you have your reward when the smoke ascendeth forever and the fire is not quenched. So save your postage. — Dallas, Texas

I have been sending a few names to Carl Ketcherside each month so that brethren in the Dallas area might become better acquainted with what he is trying to do. A physician received such a copy and immediately sent in 40 or 50 subscriptions, including other physicians and a number of preachers on the list. Others responded with comparative enthusiasm. But this brother wrote the above to brother Ketcherside, who in turn mailed it on to me, without comment. Perhaps the St. Louis editor thought I should know where I am going, so that I can make my plans accordingly! He offered no word of consolation, as if perhaps he had no intention of going along, which I think is very unbrotherly.

Seriously, I would say to the Dallas brother, if he can contain himself long enough to get this read, that I am glad that he expressed himself freely to us. I commend him for signing his name to what he wrote. We would welcome his criticisms, if he would care to tell us *wherein* we are a disgrace to the Lord. Even though he is not our judge (admittedly it is good for us that he is not!), we would give any suggestions he cares to make careful consideration. We believe in criticism, and we can take it and are glad to get it. But it doesn't help much just to tell us we are going to hell, especially when it sounds like you are sort of glad we are!

## LOTS OF PLACES

> Praise the Lord! The Spirit must be at work. Never have I been filled with so many spiritual things that I need to share with you. Christianity is breaking out all over. The spiritual emphasis on this campus is at an all time high . . . This surging movement in the Church of Christ is not just a local thing. My friends tell me that this was the predominant mood and feeling of the 800 students from 13 Christian colleges that attended the Harding Missions Workshop. They were silently seeking the way of the Cross, but now more openly . . . —*a student at a Christian College*

> The material that you present in *Restoration Review* is as fine and worthy of respect and praise as any that I have read. I' must thank you personally for the aid you have given to me through your work. The highest compliment that I can think to give you is that I think you are truly a man of the Spirit. May the Lord continue to work so powerfully through you — *Sumerlin, Oregon*

No doubt, not caring about the truthfulness of your charge, you'll say, "just prejudiced". But if so, it is prejudice from the scene of action — not the 800 miles removed variety aroused by the slanted, editorialized, news reports of the Eric Sevareid, Huntley- Brinkley variety. Come to think of it, your editorial is comical, coming from so near to where Lee Harvey Oswald was according to TV pictures, left wide open in front by police to be gunned down by your fellow-citizen, Jack Ruby.

Come to see us "cowards". We'll show you how we treat wild and wooly western editors, smothering them to death with disappointment by ignoring their presence. — *Montgomery, Alabama*

(This was in response to my editorial in the October issue on "Justice in Alabama." It was not signed. While I was not sure at first, I finally decided that it was intended to be taken seriously. )

I am concerned about the divisions and the general attitude of the brotherhood today, and it is encouraging to know that some are thinking and writing about it. — *a student at a Christian college*

I am interested in the possibility of a new restoration. I am a preacher of the Church of Christ, non-instrument variety, who is discouraged with narrowness and tradition. — *West Virginia*

What an experience it would have been could I have been at the unity meeting in Dallas! The good accomplished there will probably never be known, but the seed of unity which it has sown will ripen into a golden harvest in future years-a *student at a Christian college*

I wholly concur with you that there is a need for "dialogue toward better understanding and more sensitivity toward brotherhood." While I am not always in agreement with specific views expressed in the *Restoration Review,* I do believe that the lack of free and honest dialogue is abhorrent. — a *college professor*

The impression that is left in *Restoration Review* is that nothing good comes out of Abilene. You totally ignore the efforts of men like . . . (he names four professors) . . . who are saying the same things you are, only in less iconoclastic ways . . . Please do not feel that you are waging a one-man war. There are many who hold equally liberal views. Some feel, however, that the most worthwhile influence can be made by introducing innovations clothed in conventional language, which does not have the effect of alienating brethren. — *a student at a Christian college*

(I am sorry that I have left the impression that nothing good comes out of Abilene, for I too came out of there, as well as a number of the writers of this journal. It is a delightful surprise to learn that several profs at Abilene are saying the same things I am. I won't tell the editors on them if you won't! I do not intend to *alienate* brethren. I am trying to get brethren to receive again those that are already alienated. If a man can couch these ideas in "conventional language," and thus say it better than I am saying it, the good Lord bless

him in his effort. I've never claimed that the other fellow should say it like I do. All I know to do is to say it. I pray for guidance, and I ask the Lord to help me in saying what I say in the very best way. I realize that I fall far short. While I am not sure what "conventional language" is, I favor any approach that is effective. We must make sure that we do indeed *say* it, without equivocation. )

> I enjoy *Restoration Review* and agree wholeheartedly with many of the ideas expressed, and I know we should have a great deal more teaching in these areas. However, sometimes I seem to detect scorn, ridicule or sarcasm in the articles that perhaps is not intended . . . Since you are skilled in the use of the pen perhaps you could express your thoughts in a way that would not leave this impression. It is much easier to read and give serious thought to ideas that are set forth which seem to have love as the motivating factor. . . — *Nebraska*

(Believe me, I appreciate these criticisms. The Lord knows I try to write without scorn and sarcasm. I will pray more about it and I will try harder. My, if you could see what I scratch out, or what my wife talks me out of publishing, you would bear with me! I become so incensed over our smug self-righteousness that I am often compelled to put acid into my words. The good Lord make me gentle! Keep criticizing me if I don't improve.)

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*Dimensions in Brotherhood . . . No. 4*

## BROTHERHOOD AND THE JUDGMENT OF GOD

The Bible makes it clear over and over again that we will face the judgment of God on the basis of how we treat each other. Jesus will say, "Come, o blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . " on the grounds that "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." Contrariwise the Lord will say, "Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels . . . " to those who neglect and reject their brethren: "As you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me."

It is a most significant truth of Holy Writ that our treatment of a brother is equated with our treatment of Jesus himself. To reject a brother is to reject the Lord.

The force of this truth is intensified by the fact that it is the *least* of the brethren that Jesus speaks of. We have editors, college presidents, professors, big-time evangelists, and the ministers of large churches — and of course rich brethren. We may be tempted to honor these above the lesser brethren who have not attained fame, fortune or position.

"My brethren, show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man with gold rings and in fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, 'Have a seat here, please' while you say to the poor man, 'Stand there,' or, 'Sit at my feet,' have you not made distinctions among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:1-4)

One of the most sobering thoughts in the Bible follows: "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him?"

In 1 Cor. 8:11 Paul shows how "the weak brother" can be destroyed by our thoughtless behavior, "the brother for whom Christ died." He forcefully adds: "Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ." The apostle goes on to say that he will forego the eating of meat if in so doing he causes a brother to fall. It is this kind of sensitivity toward brotherhood that will save us from our divisiveness. It is a sensitivity born of a consciousness of God's judgment. Paul elsewhere relates the judgment we make of a brother with the judgment that we ourselves shall face in the presence of God.

"Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God." (Rom. 14:10) And so in the same context he asks: "Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls."

My brother is not *my* servant, but the servant of another. It is sufficient to let his Master judge him. For me to pass judgment on him is like passing judgment on the Lord, just as I let the Lord go hungry if I let my brother go hungry. If I wound and destroy my brother, I am doing this to the Christ. These should be chastening thoughts to those of us who brand our brethren with such labels as *digressive, unfaithful, liberal,* and all the rest, terms that are usually intended to destroy the brother. All such terms, along with language like "a brother in error," implies that *we* are right and are above such labels. It is always our side that has the truth and that is faithful.

A story from the ancient world tells how the philosopher Socrates once encountered a man who was suing his own father for impiety. Socrates was amazed that anyone would be so presumptuous about his own piety as to file charges against his own father for impiety. So he attempted to learn from the man what piety is, seeing that the man was an expert in such matters. The man's reply was: "Piety is doing as I do."

It must be just as amazing to those of the world of our time that we can be so presumptuous in our judgments. Without even blinking our eyes we can tell the religious world that the answer to division in Christendom is for everybody to be like ourselves. The amazement is surely aggravated by the fact that we can divide ourselves into a dozen

different "loyal" groups while we talk this way. If Socrates was perplexed when a man, innocently tricked by his own self-righteousness, could go so far as to take his own father into court for a lack of righteousness, then we can *see* how disturbed our religious neighbors become when the Church of Christ so divides into separate parties that brothers cannot even speak to each other.

Perhaps we need a Socrates to ask us if we have no fear of God. He would serve us well by calling for a definition of *faithfulness* and *truth* and *loyalty.* Our judgments would indeed suggest that we are experts on such subjects.

If Euthyphro, the man who had to face Socrates, could not define piety, it might be risky for me to attempt it. But for the purposes of this article we might say that piety is that way of life that grows out of a man's love for his brother and for God. The pious man lives with the realization that he faces God in judgment for the way he treats man in this world.

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?" (Matt. 7:1-3)

There are two or three good reasons why we should not judge, the main one being that we simply are not capable of doing so. We therefore should not attempt it. Another reason is that we set up the standard by which we ourselves are to be judged when we indulge our judgments upon others. Another good reason is that we avoid those judgments upon ourselves that we might unkindly impose on others. "Judge not that you be not judged."

Jesus places the relationship between brothers above worship itself: "So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."

There are too many of us who are meticulous about "the five acts of public worship" who are quite willing to exclude a brother from fellowship because he is different in some particular from ourselves. We are much more particular about going to worship than we are in becoming reconciled to our brethren. If Jesus would tell his disciples to establish right relationship with their brethren before offering their gifts, should we not be much more aware of our separated brethren?

The secretary at a main-line Church of Christ in Texas, when asked about certain congregations not listed in Church of Christ ads, explained rather indifferently, "Oh, we don't fellowship those churches." These were non-Sunday School and "premill" churches. This is the typical attitude. There is part of the brotherhood that it pleases us to ignore. Not only do we never visit them, we are willing to speak of them (if they happen to be mentioned) with more disdain than tenderness — and nearly always with some label.

If we really believed that in wounding a brother we wound Jesus, and if we really saw the connection between brotherhood and the judgment of God, we might think more about our relationship to *all* our brethren when we take our gifts to the altar. Something is indeed wrong when one will carefully execute all the acts of worship, and at the same time refuse to call on a brother to lead a prayer to the Father because "he's from that premillennial church."

It may be that when we suppose we are righteous in our judgments we are often really *fleshly.* Jesus so spoke to the Pharisees: "You judge according to the flesh. I judge no one." (John 8:15) It is in this context that I recall the sister who could not decide to call me *Mister* or *Brother.* She talked with her minister about it, and they decided that I could be called "Brother Garrett" — with the mental reservation that I was "a brother in error." I have long since wondered if there is a brother *not* in error! But I explained to the good sister that she was indeed my sister in the Lord, and I honored her as such, with no thought given to the matter of whether she is *in* error or *out* of error, whatever that kind of talk might mean.

In 1 Cor. 4:1-5 Paul speaks of three judgments that every man must face: *the judgment of others, the judgment of self, the judgment of God.* Of the first he says: "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court." Of the second he says: "I do not even judge myself. I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted." And of the third: "It is the lord who judges me."

In regard to the judgment of others, we should be willing to listen to such judgments with a view of making whatever changes would be proper, for it is a fact that the criticisms of others, however cruel and hostile, are often true, and we can profit from them. As a cynic philosopher said: "There are only two people who can tell you the truth about yourself — an enemy who has lost his temper and a friend who loves you dearly." But we can agree with Paul that the judgment of others "is a very small thing" in contrast to God's judgment.

The point here is that it is much better to be judged by others than to be found judging others. This must be what Socrates meant when he said: "It is better to suffer wrong than to commit wrong." It would mean much to the church if we could all think that way, making sure that we never pass judgment on others even if they pass judgment on us.

Even though Paul could say "I do not even judge myself," there is a sense in which we cannot escape judging ourselves, and perhaps we should not, for it is true, to quote Socrates once more, that "the unexamined life is not worth living." And even the apostle could write: "Examine yourselves, to see whether you are holding to your faith. Test yourselves." (2 Cor. 13:5)

The meaning of Paul's reluctance to judge himself is that human judgment is always uncertain. It is risky to judge oneself, for it is easy to be self-satisfied. The only judgment that really counts is heavenly: "It is the lord who judges me." This is comforting on the one hand, for it means that frail men who are given to prejudices do not decide our fate; but it is fearful on the other hand, for it tells us that we are indeed to be judged — by the God of all mankind. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:31)

When we are so pure that we cannot associate with a certain brother, when we are so righteous that we cannot even recognize him as a brother, when we are so faithful that we cannot even visit his congregation, when we are so satisfied that we listen only to those who will tell us what we already believe, when we are so right in all our doctrines that we can readily separate the sheep from the goats, it is time to heed these words:

"So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgment." (James 2:12 -13 ) — *the Editor*

How does one contribute to the greatness and strength of a free society? One answer is pursue excellence! The idea for which this nation stands will not survive if the highest goal free men can set themselves is an amiable mediocrity. — *John Gardner*

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## DARE I SAY "MERRY CHRISTMAS"?

*By Thomas C. Lewis*

Another Christmas season has arrived, and if experiences with the past indicate anything, there is a month-long, annual campaign about to be launched by the Churches of Christ against being religious in December. This is the season to be jolly, string the tree, and hang the holly, but, for goodness (literally) sake, keep Christ out of Xmas! Give gifts if you expect to receive them, but *please* don't bring up wise men. Sing Christmas carols if you must, but only because you like them. Be sure the singing is detached from religious meaning, and don't let the songs make you feel any more conscious of God than you always feel.

Why must we go out of our way to ignore Christ in December? The most obvious reason is that Christmas is a time of accelerated religious activity among our religious neighbors. And Christians must be set apart from the world. What better opportunity is there for us to prove to others that we are a "peculiar" people? It is an effective method. And we like being a minority group ("few there be that find it"). We feel righteous when we "put down denominational error." We feel persecuted ("blessed") when others think we are obnoxious. Each time we can get ourselves offended about Christmas, we deposit another salvation point in our Merit Bank, recording each one in the "suffering" column of the ledger of life. Just like a savings account. Or, as I have heard and seen, an insurance policy.

The other reason we de-Christ Christmas lends support to the primary one. Our attitude is *scriptural.* We can go to our Bibles and pluck passages from them just as we can take vegetables from our gardens. The great Apostle Paul established the pattern for our behavior when he wrote to the apostates at Galatia. "Ye observe days and months and times and years; I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed labor on you in vain." (Gal. 4:11 ) It makes no difference that he was combating legalism as the Jews taught it. It doesn't matter that the Galatians were being bound by the orthodoxy of the old law by men who still felt uncomfortable in Christ's freedom. Indeed, Paul wasn't talking about the *error* of legalism at all, he was merely replacing a law of observance with a law of abstinence. And all of God's *true* children know that this is the very principle for which Christ came to life and was crucified; i.e., to turn the garment wrong-side-our, to reverse the "law" of the Jews and knit a new religious garment of arabesque laws. That is what is meant by "putting on Christ." The salvation sweater is surely knit, and it is made of close stitches.

There is an abundance of passages on "our side," too; our garden is full. Anyone who doubts the validity of our conclusions based on what the Galatian letter says may also read Col. 2:18, another passage penned by Paul, and *see* that he was unequivocal on this matter of observing religious holidays: "let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the thing to come; but the body is Christ's."

How could he say more clearly the sin of observing a day such as Christmas? Of course, when he condemns religious days here he did not mean for us to take him literally on the matter of drink. No good Christian would touch an alcoholic beverage, since that is always the first step to alcoholism and debauchery. We *may* judge a person who drinks a glass of wine, because the New Testament always talks about wine in the sense of "grape juice." People were always getting drunk on new grape juice back then.

Now, if those proofs do not convince the Christmas observers, we can even show them in the Old Testament, which doesn't apply to us, that God hated religious days then. He began them himself through commandment, but they got out of hand, so he changed his

opinion. “Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me; I am weary of bearing them.” (Isa. 1:14) Conclusive evidence that Christmas and Easter are abominations before the Lord.

Most of my readers will recoil from the spirit of the above arguments. The case sounds too smug, too self-righteous, too “cute”. I am fully aware that the satirical tone is biting and repulsive. But the awful fact is that many of us accept the passages quoted as teaching just the attitudes and orthodoxy they represent here. We usually --- those of us who have the least smattering of sensitivity and regard for the feelings of fellow human beings --- try to say those things with more tact. We need tact and we need kindness. But the trouble is that most of us *do try* to say those things, those arguments.

I have used satire, a very cleansing tool though sharp, to exaggerate, to make vivid the contentions that are offered against the observation of Christmas and Easter and other such religious times. The honest reader who has come so patiently with me this far will not balk to examine the contexts of the scriptures cited. It is my conviction that not one of them can fairly be construed as condemning a religious observance of days such as Christmas. What is condemned, in each case, is the legalism that would prompt anyone to trust his salvation to such performances rather than to God.

The problem Paul confronted with the Galatians and with the Colossians was the problem of legalism. Change is difficult to accept. Lord Byron’s “Prisoner of Chillon” tells of a man imprisoned in a dungeon so long that when he was set free he didn’t care to go. This situation was typical of the Jewish converts to Christianity. They had lived in bondage to law and orthodoxy so long that they were afraid to be freed. So they kept going back to circumcision, passover, and other exact points of the law. These they felt comfortable with, for these were part of their history and inheritance. When they attempted to put them on the new Church, they put them there with all the fervor and dogmatism that they knew under Judaism. They accepted them as things to do that placated God. They made God one to be served stoically rather than one to be sought through love. Such an attitude could only nullify the teachings of Jesus. Their legalism shut out love, and Paul reproved them because loving God is the most important thing there is. Paul does not write because they are using a particular means to make God more real to themselves, but he writes because they are stopping at the means, forgetting God as one to love, and reverting to forms, laws to replace the end itself.

The same was true when Isaiah wrote. God was not angry because the people kept new moons, feast days, and sabbaths; he was grieved and broken-hearted because the people thought no more of him than to believe he could be bought off with a few sacrifices and hours of pious posture. Isaiah says, “your hands are full of blood.” Holy days were not abominable when the people were holy at other times. But the hypocrisy of formal worship was an abomination because their hearts were far from serving God.

If any scripture passage speaks against form worship without devotion, the second chapter of Colossians does. If any thing is said there, it says legalism is dead. Christ "blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us . . . " We do not now live by law but by love, which is God, which is Christ. Conscience and integrity is what we put on when we put on Christ, not another and tighter, more suffocating sweater than the Judaic law system. As a body we are to find our coherence in the head, which is Christ, not in a system which is extraneous to him.

I have ventured dangerously in using the terms "conscience" and "integrity" as the essence of Christianity, and yet I can know of no other thing that makes one Christian except those qualities. Certainly our baptism is a shallow burial without them.

Again it is Paul that exalts the conscience. The only good thing he could say about his life as a persecutor of Christ is that he did it in good conscience. Paul was, even then, a man of great integrity, for the Lord chose him to do his greatest work. Later, when he had become wholly dedicated to the work of Christ, he again wrote of the importance of conscience:

> But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples. One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? To his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall stand; for the the Lord hath power to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. --- Rom. 14:1-6.

I will worship God this Christmas as I did last Christmas. To me, it is a time very special, not because I am convinced of its historical authenticity on that date, but because I like to emphasize and exalt the coming of Christ at a time when others become more sensitive to him. The day of Christmas or of Easter is not holy, nor are they commanded. But God help us to see the importance of utilizing every means toward the glorious end, which is God.

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## HOW TO SUCCEED IN PARTY POLITICS

*By Stan Paregien*

NOTE: The following suggestions were expressly designed for use by young, inexperienced preachers who are seeking stardom in the Texas-Tennessee brand of party politics. However, one may easily adapt these rules to fit any of the other twenty-four factions in the Restoration Movement.

1. Send reports of your meetings to at least one brotherhood magazine. Needless to say, one should report only the "great" meetings; those with poor "visible results" are better left unpublicized. For as one veteran preacher knowingly commented after several nights of a gospel meeting had gone by with no results, "We've got to do better than this. How will it look in *"The Old Repliable?"*

   While improving your own image, it may also prove to be profitable to mention that "Brother Blank, who is the regular minister at Faithful Church of Christ, is carrying on the work in a fine way." This tactic is based on the philosophy that "if you scratch his back, he'll scratch yours," and it has been found to work quite effectively.
2. Attend all of the Christian College lectureships you possibly can find time for. Perhaps all that is said at the lectureships will not be especially enlightening or inspiring — perhaps not even consistent — but you don't have to agree with all that is taught; just don't let anyone know about your heretical views! Every faithful preacher knows there are two sides to every question: the wrong way and the party's way. One who dares to rock the party boat may find himself treading water. Besides, most elderships want a regular party man — a "putty" man — and, remember this, a preacher can't afford to bite the hand that signs his check.
3. Never fail to send in pictures and copy to one of the brotherhood papers (preferably the one which directs the party machine in your area) for any and everything your congregation does — the more exposure your name gets, the better off you are. This word of warning, however, to the novice: don't capitalize the word "church" when used as the party title. A monstrous mistake like that would very likely start the faithful brethren wondering whether you have "gone digressive."
4. As greener pastures call you from congregation to congregation, always go to a larger church. For the best results, try to end up preaching in Texas or Tennessee and if you can also preach for a congregation located near a Christian College, so much the better. After all, if you are going to work in the Lord's vineyard, you may as well be in a position to take home a generous share of the grapes.

The only problem you may encounter in this endeavor is the occasional fanatic who will ask why you are preaching to the saved rather than being in a mission area preaching to the lost. Just tell him you think you can do more good where you now work; that will probably hold the questioner until you can formulate a better excuse.

5. Choose some prominent preacher's pet project and get behind it. Then push, push, push to make it a glittering success. In this way the brethren will come to associate your name with that of the more widely known preacher, thereby enhancing your stature in their eyes. You may even come to be recognized as a rising star in the Party firmament.
6. Learn to be a "name dropper." Ordinary brethren — the laity — will tend to be impressed if they think you are on familiar, friendly terms with the big-name preachers. A young minister elbowing for a place in the sun must keep in mind that the firm foundation upon which the party's system of preacher promotion rests is this inspired principle: "It's not WHAT you know; it's WHO you know."
7. Be sure to have your name and picture included in the official preacher's album, Ministers of Tod*ay.* After all, what group of elders would be reckless enough to consider hiring a preacher who is not even listed among the approved faithful gospel preachers?
8. Learn to use the ecclesiastical vocabulary sanctioned by the Party. The uncrowned king of the Party would be most pleased to send you his *ex officio* definitions if you will send your word list to him, in care of the party paper which he edits.

However, for those who are too busy to do so, we suggest that every aspiring young preacher familiarize himself with these basic words: First, the word "liberal" may be defined as, "That person (or group) who has something or believes in something which we do not have or in which we do not believe." Secondly, the word "anti" may be defined as, "That person (or group) who does not have what we have or does not subscribe to what the Bible says (sometimes maliciously called our "interpretation")." Thirdly, a word which should be applied quite cautiously is the word, "faithful." It may be defined as, "Any person (or group) which has what we have and believes what we believe, as directed by the party bosses." Fourthly, the term "matter of faith" simply refers to anything which WE believe is taught in the Bible. Conversely, a "matter of opinion" is anything which we are not too concerned about, unless someone tries to bind it upon us as being Scriptural.

Any young minister who wants prominence in party politics will probably find it by following the system suggested above. However, numerous feathers in a party cap will hardly be satisfying to one who devoutly desires stars in a heavenly crown.

Happily, there are indications that many consecrated young Christian men are becoming concerned about the obvious inconsistencies between our preaching and our practicing. They are becoming increasingly aware of their ability to secure spiritual

emancipation by throwing off the shackles of tradition forged by the Party blacksmiths. They recognize that, as Emerson said in a speech entitled, “The American Scholar,”

The world is his who can see through its pretension. What deafness, what stone-blind custom, what overgrown error you behold is there only by sufferance. See it to be a lie, and you have already dealt it its mortal blow.

The eyes of many disciples are moist with tears when they reflect upon the broken hearts, confused lives, and lost souls bobbing in the wake left by preachers in their sacred scramble for the chief seats in the synagogue. But, a system which promotes the preaching of “sweet nothings” and practices party politics instead of Christian principles can expect little else — what was it Paul said? Something about sowing and reaping.

It takes courage, humility, faith, and fortitude for a young preacher to turn from the party’s primrose path to the rugged road of reform and restoration. For the young man who chooses spiritual freedom, the future does not promise a prominent pulpit in Nashville, Abilene, Lubbock, or Dallas, as the following lines by an unknown writer suggest:

> “Father, where shall I work today?”
> And my love flowed warm and free.
> Then He pointed me toward a tiny spot
> And said, “Tend that for Me.”
> I answered quickly, “Oh no, not that!
> Why, no one would ever see,
> No matter how well my work was done
> In that little place for Thee.”
> And the word He spoke, it was not stern,
> He answered me tenderly:
> “Ah, little one, search that heart of thine;
> Art thou working for them or Me?
> Nazareth was a little place,
> And so was Galilee!”

So, the question for the young preacher to ask himself is this: do you want to follow party preachments enshrined in unwritten creeds, or do you desire to freely explore the forgotten frontiers of faith? Have you made your decision? Who is to reign as king in your life — the patron saint of the party, or the Prince of Peace? — 3524 Anderson S.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico

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The article “Beware of ‘Liberalism’” in the October issue was mistakenly assigned to Stan Paregien. Its author was rather Terence E. Johnson, now minister to the Church of Christ, 1406 Sixteenth Ave., Rockford, Illinois 61108. Both Stan and Terry were recently at David Lipscomb College together, and since they think and write somewhat alike, and since we had articles on hand from them both, we assigned an unidentified article to the wrong one. We are sorry.

This article *is* by Stan Paregien, and we are happy to report that he is now doing graduate work at the University of New Mexico.

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## BOOK NOTES

Again we remind our readers of the Credit Plan available to them. You can order any or all books we mention in this column, including the more expensive sets of books, and pay for them, without carrying charges, at the rate of 10% per month or $5.00 per month, whichever is the higher figure. For example, if your balance is $80.00, then on the first of the month you will be billed for $8.00; if the balance is $16.00, you will be billed for $5.00. We any ask that the balance never exceed $100.00. This plan enables our readers to build a substantial library at a consistent pace, with small monthly payments and at no extra expense.

Several of our readers have ordered *The Great Texts of the Bible* at the highly improbable price of only $56.25, the usual price is around $80.00. This is because of a special deal from the publisher. The time limit has been extended, so you can still get in on it. This is the famous set of 21 volumes covering the entire Bible. It is a beautiful set of books that are highly useful for Bible study. The material is non-technical, highly readable, and rich in background references.

The one-volume commentary covering the entire Bible, entitled *The New Bible Commentary*, deserves commendation. We can make it available to you at $7.95, a good price for a book of 1200 pages, beautifully done. It has fifty authors from a half dozen nations, and it has splendid introductions to each book of the Bible, with comments on most any passage that might trouble you. It is truly amazing that anyone volume could have so much viral material within its covers.

A companion volume to the commentary is *The New Bible Dictionary*, which is equally good looking and even larger, containing 1400 pages, plus 17 colored maps. It is a splendid dictionary, having the endorsement of none other than Prof. Albright of Johns Hopkins, the famous archaeologist, who says: "This is the best one-volume dictionary in English. There are 2,300 articles and 237 special drawings, not counting the maps. Though thorough, it is readable and clear. For instance, if you look up the term "Law", you will find nearly six large pages on this subject, covering not only both Testaments, but ancient codes as well. It is a new publication with everything up-to-date (three pages describe the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls). $12.95

We can now supply in paperback at only $2.95 James DeForest Murch's history of the Restoration Movement, entitled *Christians Only.* It starts at the beginning and comes right on up to "Modern Disciples and Christian Unity." It *is* so thorough and up-to-date that it refers (and sometimes quotes from) *Restoration Review* and *Mission Messenger* and their editors. If you have even moderate interest in the Restoration Plea, you will want this book.

Also available in paperback are two other important books on Restoration studies. *The Fool of God*, by Louis Cochran, is the life story of Alexander Campbell, and *Raccoon John Smith*, also by Cochran, are only $1.95 each. Once you start reading either of these exciting novels, you will find it hard to stop.

Our people are negligent in reading devotional literature, such as meditations, poetry, and prayers. We suggest you give a few minutes a day to this kind of literature. *Five Minutes A Day,* by Robert E. Speer, draws upon the Bible, the poets, and the saints. You will be edified. An ideal little gift too. Only $1.75. A similar work is *The Plain Man Looks at the Beatitudes*, by William Barclay, for only $1.00. This comes directly from Scotland.

Also by Barclay is *The All-Sufficient Christ*, which is a study in Colossians. $1.45. *The Daily Bible Study* by Barclay covers the entire New Testament, and all who use this 17-volume set praise it. They are $2.50 each or $39.50 for the complete set in hardbound edition.

If you are looking for a gift for a youth, we suggest a Bible with a zipper leatheroid cover, easy-to-read, wrapped in cellophane and boxed --- a smart gift for only $5.50. We'll take it back if you don't like it. Also a thoughtful gift to one who likes to have different versions of the New Testament is *The New Testament in Plain English* by Charles Williams, now in paperback at only $2.45. You will appreciate the freshness of the translation. Rom. 8:1 for instance: "There is now, therefore, no sentence of 'Guilty' for those that are in Christ Jesus."

If you would like to dip into Philosophy a bit, and yet stay well within Christian tradition (and wade a little in existentialism!), we suggest *The Burden of Soren Kierkegaard* by Edward Carnell at $3.50.

Do you like novels? Charles Williams was one of the finest Christian writers of England. His novels are breathtaking in excitement, and they are designed to show how man's soul can and does deteriorate in our kind of world, as well as the triumph of the soul's salvation. In inexpensive paperbacks the Williams' novels are available again: *The Place of the Lion, Shadows of Ecstasy,* and *Many Dimensions.* They are $1.95 each.

*The Threshold of Christianity* is a little volume that tells the story of what happened between in the period between the Testaments. $1.50. *The Anatomy of Anti-Semitism* argues that the deepest cleavage between men is racial, especially between Jew and Gentile. There are other essays in the little volume, including one on The New Morality, which criticizes Robinson's *Honest to God.* The author says: "The garment of U. S. morals is not sagging at the hemline; it is coming apart at the seams." $1.45.

Back issues of Restoration Review are available at ten cents each. All 19 of the monthly issues can be had; the quarterly numbers (up to 1963) are 3 for $1.00, with some 10 numbers available.

Take a good look at artist Lydic's conception of "The Elijah Blues" on our front cover. Do you sometime feel that there is no use trying, that nothing can be done about the situation anyhow? Let us assure you that there are many with the same hopes for a Spirit-filled, unity-conscious brotherhood. But we must all do more than we are doing, and one thing that is possible for all of us is to double the circulation of this journal, which is an outlet for the free expressions of some of our most talented and promising scholars, men who are concerned over the lack of dialogue in our terribly divided brotherhood.

*Your help means more than you think!* This journal cannot expect help from institutional or clerical circles. Its support must come from the concerned ones within the rank and file of all persuasions of the Restoration Movement. Our subscription plan is well within the reach of all who have the will to help. You can send the paper to six people for only $3.00 a year. Single subs $1.00 a year. Or we'll mail you a bundle at ten cents per copy, and you can distribute them as you will.

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